

American Association of University Professors
University of Connecticut Health Center Chapter

Written Testimony for the Appropriation Committee February 15, 2023

Laura Haynes, Ph.D. Professor
Center on Aging and Department of Immunology
President, UCHC-AAUP

My name is Laura Haynes and I am president of the faculty union at UConn Health, representing 650 faculty members in the School of Medicine, School of Dental Medicine, and Graduate School. I am also a full-time Professor in the Center on Aging and the Department of Immunology at UConn Health. I would like to thank each of you for your leadership and support for UConn Health during extremely challenging times.

Our Union is proud to represent faculty members who, every day, provide top-quality health care services for Connecticut residents, conduct cutting-edge scientific research in our laboratories, and train the state's future physicians, dentists, and scientists. The COVID pandemic has brought renewed attention to the need to combat inequities in access to health care and access to affordable higher education. At UConn Health, the state's only public academic medical center, we are a shining example of our state's commitment to combating these inequities. We provide an affordable option for Connecticut students to pursue careers in medicine, dental medicine, and scientific research. Our members care for the most vulnerable residents of our state, often when other providers will not. In addition, we are the state's largest provider of dental services to Medicaid recipients. We are a public, academic medical center that works for the public good.

Investments in UConn Health help to build Connecticut's future workforce while helping to take care of its most vulnerable residents and supporting research to benefit the well being of Connecticut's residents in a myriad of ways. Considering that Connecticut's fiscal health is stronger than it has been in decades, it is difficult for us to understand why the Governor would contemplate cuts to either UConn or UConn Health. We should be talking about how to expand the health care services and educational opportunities that we offer, not defending them against cutbacks.

We are asking for you to continue to support our critical mission by:

- (1) Fully funding our block grants for both UConn and UConn Health; and
- (2) Permanently removing the state's unfunded legacy costs from our UConn Health operating budget in order to help to make our research grants much more competitive.

Thank you for your time and continued support,

Laura Haynes